

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended, and claim 6 has been cancelled. A listing of the claims follows and replaces all prior listing of the claims.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A lubricant composition having a mixing consistency (at 25°C) adjusted to range from 265 to 475, for noise reduction of a speed reduction gear when filled into an engaged portion of a small gear and a large gear of the speed reduction gear, the lubricant composition consisting essentially of:

a lubricating base oil;

a thickener that is a calcium sulfonate-based thickener comprised of calcium sulfonate and that is mixed into the lubricating base oil to prevent oil separation; and

fine particles that are dispersed within the lubricating base oil so that the lubricant composition has the mixing consistency (at 25°C) adjusted to range from 265 to 475, and that are composed of any one kind of fine particles selected from the group consisting of:

(a) buffer particles made of a rubber or a soft resin, for use when one of the small gear and the large gear is made of a resin and another of the small gear and the large gear is made of a metal, in an amount of from 20 to 300 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of a total amount of the lubricating base oil and the calcium sulfonate-based thickener,

(b) particles having intermediate hardness made of a material which is softer than a gear tooth surface made of a metal and is harder than a gear tooth surface made of a resin, for use when one of the small gear and the large gear is made of the resin and another of the small gear and the large gear is made of the metal, in an amount of from 3 to 50 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of a total amount of the lubricating base oil and the calcium sulfonate-based thickener, and

(c) metal particles made of a metal which is softer than a gear tooth surface made of a metal, for use when both the small gear and the large gear are made of the metal, in an amount of from 3 to 50 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of a total amount of the lubricating base oil and the calcium sulfonate-based thickener.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): The lubricant composition according to claim 1, wherein the calcium sulfonate-based thickener is a complex of calcium sulfonate and at least one calcium salt selected from the group consisting of calcium carbonate, a higher fatty acid calcium salt, a lower fatty acid calcium salt, and calcium borate.

Claim 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Previously presented): The lubricant composition according to claim 1, wherein the fine particles are buffer particles.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The lubricant composition according to claim 4, wherein the buffer particles have an average particle diameter, D_1 , within a range of $50 \mu\text{m} < D_1 \leq 300 \mu\text{m}$.

Claim 6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 1, wherein the lubricating base oil has a kinematic viscosity ranging from 5 to 200 mm²/s (40°C), and wherein the lubricant composition has a mixing consistency (25°C) ranging from 265 to 475.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): A speed reduction gear, comprising:

a small gear; and

a large gear that engages the small gear and defines a region including an engaged portion of both gears that is filled with the lubricant composition of claim 1.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): An electric power steering apparatus, comprising:

a steering mechanism;

a speed reduction gear according to claim 8; and

an electric motor for steering assist having an output that is transmitted to the steering mechanism by reducing its speed through the speed reduction gear .